

# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

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**No. CCXXV.**

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THE two-hundred-and-twenty-second Meeting of the Club was held at Pagani's Restaurant, 42-48 Great Portland Street, W., on Wednesday, May 9th, 1917.

*Chairman*: The Lord ROTHSCHILD, Ph.D., F.R.S.

*Members present*:—E. C. STUART BAKER; P. F. BUNYARD; A. EZRA; ERNEST GIBSON; E. HARTERT; G. C. LAMBERT; E. G. B. MEADE-WALDO; H. MUNT; A. E. PRICE; C. B. RICKETT; D. SETH-SMITH (*Editor*); C. G. TALBOT-PONSONBY (*Hon. Sec. & Treasurer*); H. M. WALLIS; H. F. WITHERBY.

*Guests*:—Dr. E. HOPKINSON; Dr. PERCY RENDALL; H. R. MUNT.

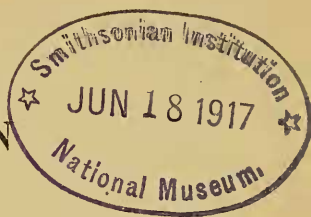
The CHAIRMAN exhibited a large water-colour picture showing the varieties of the Monaul, and read the following paper:—

On the Status of *Lophophorus impejanus* Lath.  
and *L. refulgens* Temm. By Lord ROTHSCHILD, F.R.S.

Up to the year 1884 three species of Monaul Pheasant were recognised—The "Common Monaul" of India, with a rufous tail, fiery neck, and metallic bronze-green interscapulum and

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large white patch on the rump, identified as *Lophophorus impeyanus* Bonn. ; L'Huys' Monaul from Thibet and West China, with a metallic green-blue tail, coppery bronze neck and interscapulum, and a white rump the lower feathers of which are tipped with blue, *L. Phuysii* Verr. & G. St.-Hil. ; and, lastly, Sclater's Monaul from the Mishmi Hills, Assam, which has a fiery neck, green-blue interscapulum, a rufous tail broadly tipped with white, and a white rump, *L. sclateri* Jerd.

In 1884 Colonel Marshall described as new a Monaul from the Chamba Valley, Kashmir, under the name of *Lophophorus chambanus*. The chief differences from *L. impeyanus* auct. were the metallic blue-green, *not black*, breast, and the total absence of white on the rump. As, however, the amount of green on the breast of the three specimens varied much, and moreover Colonel Marshall procured true black-breasted, white-rumped Monauls in the Chamba Valley, he ought to have hesitated before describing it.

In 1893 Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, in the twenty-second volume of the 'Catalogue of Birds,' expresses the opinion that Marshall's *Lophophorus chambanus* is the true *L. impeyanus* of Latham, and the common white-rumped bird must stand as *L. refulgens* Temm. In the same year, Mr. E. Oustalet described two skins of Monauls presented to the Paris Museum by the feather-dealer Mantou under the names of *Lophophorus impeyanus* var. *mantoui* and *L. impeyanus* var. *obscurus*, stating (Bull. Soc. Zool. France, 1893, p. 19) that he considered them "local races," *i. e.* "subspecies." Oustalet's *L. i.* var. *mantoui* differs from *L. impeyanus* auct. = *refulgens* Temm. by the interscapulum being of a beautiful metallic purplish blue, while his var. *obscurus* has all the metallic parts of the plumage sooty-black strongly washed with steel-green. These two birds were obtained by Mr. Mantou in London, and I at once caused all the consignments of Monaul skins sent to London during the next few years to be regularly searched for abnormal specimens. In this manner I have collected a large series (some 18-20 specimens) of abnormal Monaul skins, and these

prove what I have already pointed at, that *L. impejanus* Lath. = *chambanus* Marsh., and *L. refulgens* Temm. = *impejanus* auct. are one and the same bird.

My series, as depicted on the picture before the meeting, apart from the two *melanistic* aberrations, shows two distinct lines of variation. The one varies by the black of the breast being gradually overspread and swamped with intense metallic blue-green, while the white on the rump is reduced in proportion till the extreme forms show an entire absence of black on the breast and white on the rump. The second line of variation only affects the colours of the neck and interscapulum. Here we find a complete transition from the normal fiery neck and bronze-green interscapulum through every shade of metallic green-bronze, coppery-bronze, metallic maroon-red, and coppery-purple, to the metallic purplish blue of Oustalet's var. *mantoui*.

The two melanistic varieties are very striking, and have arisen in quite different ways. The one called by Oustalet var. *obscurus* is an ordinary melanism, and has been produced by the saturation of the whole of the metallic plumage with sooty-black pigment. The second one appears, however, to have been produced somewhat differently, the only part of the metallic plumage which has been changed by suffusion is the interscapulum, which is velvety-black; the rest of the metallic plumage is deep purple, evidently the result of the elimination of the green and green-blue pigments. The rufous in the tail has been eliminated and replaced by metallic steel-green.

I think this series of aberrations proves that we must go back to our standpoint before 1884, and that there are only three species of Monaul known, viz., *Lophophorus sclateri*, *L. vhuysii*, and *L. impejanus*, the latter being a very variable species. I exhibit normal males of these three species.

Dr. ERNST HARTERT exhibited specimens of *Textor niger*, and made the following remarks:—

At a meeting of this Club, in June 1902 (Bull. B. O. C.